

gender or geography or age or anything else.

The last two letters I would like to read are actually both from physicians.

Michael, from Montgomery County, the Dayton area, writes:

As a physician I see what happens to people every day when they cannot get health insurance. I see the abuses they suffer at the hands of the greedy insurance companies. I also see constant erosion in payments to doctors, hospitals, and all health care providers. The only thing that is increasing is the redtape. The redtape doesn't provide care. It takes caregivers away from patients.

Michael is a medical doctor in Montgomery County in southwest Ohio. Michael understands, because he has been victimized by it, he has been harassed by it, he has been annoyed at best by it, that he deals and his office deals with all kinds of insurance company redtape.

Mr. President, I have heard you actually talk about it in committee. You know Medicare has less than 5 percent administrative costs. The paperwork for Medicare is much less than the paperwork Michael's office has to do, dealing with hundreds and hundreds of different insurance companies. Medicare keeps its administrative costs under 5 percent. Insurance companies' administrative costs are 15, 20, sometimes even 30 percent. That is the redtape he is talking about.

Medicare is not perfect. Medicare has redtape. It needs to be streamlined every way we can do that so it is simpler and cleaner, the way we need to build the public option to be.

But we also know private insurance has huge administrative costs, huge salaries for their executives. People have come down to the floor and read what the salaries are of United Health and some of the other insurance companies—Aetna, CIGNA—the top executive salaries, often into the tens of millions of dollars each. We know they have those kinds of administrative costs. We know they have the profits they make. Fine, they should make profits, but sometimes they are excessive.

We also know they have costs for huge numbers of people in these private insurance companies who are there to deny care. When did you ever hear Medicare turn somebody down for a preexisting condition? I don't think it has ever happened. When did you ever hear Medicare say: Sorry, you are spending more than your cap; that is the end; we are not going to take care of you. The fact is, the preexisting condition, the denial of coverage because of your gender or your age or your geography, doesn't happen with Medicare. It does happen with private insurance.

Michael understands that when he writes. He talked about the greedy insurance companies. Not all of them are but some are, and some of the executives are way overpaid. We know that.

Most important, we need to cut through the redtape. That is why the public plan, competing with the private

insurance plans, will make the private plans better, and, frankly, the energy and the dynamism of the private plans probably will make the public option better too. That is the whole point of competition.

The last letter I will read comes from Ellen from Cuyahoga County, the Cleveland area.

I am a physician and a partner in a small business that offers health care benefits to its employees. For them, but most as a wife of a cancer survivor, I feel there is no more important issue than health care. We must provide affordable health care to all Americans.

We hear it from doctors, we hear it from a nurse, we hear it from patients, we hear it from family members, family members who care deeply about their family and what it has done to them.

We are about to leave here for the next month. When we come back in September, there is a deadline on negotiations in the Finance Committee. If the six—three Democratic and three Republican Senators—do not come to agreement, it is time to move forward with the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions bill we wrote. Our bill, as you recall, is a bipartisan bill. Our bill that we passed out of the HELP Committee went through 11 days of markup, 11 days of considering amendments, debating, discussing, arguing—whatever we do when we get together. Never in my 17 years in the House of Representatives and the Senate have I seen a bill have that much attention, have that many amendments, spend that long working on it. This bill has been vetted. We know the ins and outs of it.

We accepted 161 Republican amendments. Some of them were minor, some of them were major amendments. The Republicans did not win on some of the big issues, but the big issues were decided, in many ways, by the election. The big issues are things such as, should there be a Medicare-like plan or should we continue the privatization of Medicare, which is what Republicans want to do. There are very big differences there.

But the fact is, this bill is a bipartisan bill. It came out of committee with a strong vote. We know it will cover almost every American. We know it will bend the cost curve down so we will begin to save money. We know it will ban all kinds of insurance company gaming of the system, provide consumer protections for people who now have health insurance that they are generally satisfied with, and make sure those people do not lose their insurance because of preexisting conditions or discrimination.

We have work to do after being back in Ohio and the Chair back in Oregon for the next month. It is important we get back to work, after listening to our constituents and getting more input on these bills. It is important that we go back to work in September and pass health care legislation.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I had the opportunity this morning to talk with Judge Sotomayor and congratulate her on her confirmation to the Supreme Court. It is an exceedingly important position. Her nomination initiated a national discussion about the role of a judge in American society. I hope it rose to the level of debate and discussion that was worthy of such a great occasion.

She is a wonderful person. She is going to give her best effort to be a great Justice on the Court. I hope and pray she will achieve that. I reached a conclusion, as did a number of my colleagues, that her statements and expressions of judicial philosophy were such that it caused concern and gave rise to a belief that her approach to judging was part of a growing idea that judges are not bound by the law and facts but are rightly able to allow their personal views to influence their decisions.

Her testimony was different, however, from what was reflected in her speeches. I am hopeful that her testimony will be the basis by which she conducts her business on the bench.

I congratulate her. I think our discussion was at a high level. It dealt with an issue that so many of us feel very deeply about; that is, that the law must be objective, that judges must show fidelity to the law as written, even if we in Congress have not written it so well and if they would like to see it differently. That is the cornerstone of the American legal system, and I am proud of it.

I received an e-mail a few days ago from Sarah Chayes who has written a book about Afghanistan. She was an NPR reporter, stayed in Afghanistan, fell in love with the country, has learned the language and works tirelessly to improve the lives of people in that country.

She told about being in the States and meeting with the relative of an individual who tried so hard in Iraq to promote law and justice. She said this lady, her relative, said what most impressed her in America was the law. She said it was not food, it was not technology, it was not wealth that we had, it was the legal system we had. It is a beautiful, wonderful thing. It is a heritage we have received. We have not earned it. We have inherited it, and we have a responsibility to make sure we pass it on in a healthy state, to those who will follow us.

So my congratulations go to Judge Sotomayor. I know her mother and

other family members are so excited this day. This was one of the shortest confirmation processes in recent memory. I know that she is pleased that it was completed before the August recess. It will allow her to move and get herself organized for the beginning of the term in October. So, again, my congratulations are to her.

I appreciate the Members of the Senate, Chairman LEAHY, for allowing a full and robust debate on this issue. I will assure my colleagues, the issue of judicial activism is not going away. The American people feel strongly that judges must operate as their judicial oath says, in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the United States—not above them. They expect them to work diligently to determine the right answer to each case before them and to find and declare that right answer, even if the law they base it on is one they personally would like to see altered.

That is the ideal of American justice, and we will be continuing to battle for that as the months and years go forward. I think it is an important issue this country will be wrestling with.

I thank the Acting President pro tempore and yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE DEFICIT

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, before we leave for our August recess, I think it is good to maintain our watch on what is happening in the financial markets. I have reported on these matters several times this year because I think it is something we have to talk about. The reason we have to talk about it is because the United States is borrowing more money this year than any year in the history of the American Republic. It dwarfs anything we have ever done before, and it is an action that has consequences. We cannot borrow dramatically without having consequences occur, just as they do in our families. If your family goes more into debt, you are burdened with high interest rate payments that produce nothing but are monies you expend because you borrowed money. That is what interest is. It does not do you any good. It is a painful thing for no immediate benefit. The benefit comes when you borrowed it and bought something with it, but in the long run you carry that interest unless you pay the debt off in the future.

The problem this country has is that according to the President's own budget, in the next 10 years we have no

plans whatsoever to pay down any debt. In fact, the debt is surging in the outyears. Growing the deficit for each annual accounting will increase in the outyears. So we are in an unsustainable rate of spending in America. We have heard those phrases, and "unsustainable" means just that: We can't keep it up in this fashion.

I will put this chart up that is not disputed by anybody who has been involved in the process. It represents what the Congressional Budget Office—a nonpartisan group, but in truth it is hired by the Democratic majority here in the Congress, in the Senate—has scored the President's budget and what it will mean for us in terms of debt over the next 10 years. It is a 10-year budget, and we are supposed to look out into those years.

In 2008, the total debt in America was \$5.8 trillion. From the beginning of the American Republic until 2008, we had accumulated \$5.8 trillion in debt. That is a lot of money; more than we needed to have been carrying as a debt. President Bush was criticized for having several deficits, one over \$400 billion, and another one either at or around \$400 billion. Other years were less: \$100 billion, \$160 billion, something like that. But he was criticized for that because it helped cause the debt to go up. But look what the Congressional Budget Office says we are going to be facing 5 years from now in 2013: a doubling of that debt to \$11.8 trillion. Ten years from now it will triple to \$17 trillion. The debt will increase in the out years. President Bush was rightly criticized for having added a \$450 billion deficit in 1 year. We will not see in the next 10 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office, a single deficit year that low. The lowest they project is that it would be \$600 billion plus. In the tenth year, out here in 2019, it is projected the deficit will be \$1.1 trillion. This year, the deficit is projected to be \$1.8 trillion. We will soon know. Some say it will be \$2 trillion; \$1 trillion, of course, is one thousand billion dollars—a lot of money. It has consequences. Where do you get this money?

Where do we get the extra \$2 trillion we are spending today that we don't have? Where do we get it? Well, we go into the marketplace and we ask people to buy Treasury bills and loan us the money. It is basically a note. They give us their money and we give them a promise to pay, plus interest. If you don't have any plan to pay down those debts, and we don't—indeed, we continue to project a surge in borrowing even in the tenth year, with no recession being projected in this next 10 years, so it is a grim prospect to pay this kind of interest.

This chart deals with the interest payment. People think: Well, somehow we can borrow and it doesn't hurt us. That is not so. If you borrow, you have to pay interest on it. This country pays interest today on the debt of \$5.8 trillion. We are sort of fortunate because

in this economic slowdown interest rates are low, but they are not going to stay low, and that is the problem. Not only that, the size of the debt is increasing.

So in 2009, it is projected that the interest on our debt will be \$170 billion. Well, the entire Federal education budget—what, \$100 billion—the entire Federal highway budget prior to this stimulus package, at least, was \$40 billion. So \$170 billion goes out in interest to people all over the world and in the United States who have bought Treasury bills, including foreign countries such as the Arab countries who have so much of the American dollars because we buy their oil, and China, we buy their products and they have American dollars, and they have been buying our Treasury bills.

But look what happens over the 10-year window. This is according to the Congressional Budget Office—a fair, objective analysis of what we are looking at. Let's take the red numbers. This is what we would be paying out annually in interest. It goes up—by 2019, the interest we would pay at the originally projected rate of interest CBO used—to \$800 billion in 1 year in interest we pay on the debt.

People are getting worried the interest rates are going to go up because we are borrowing so much money and people are going to be afraid that the dollar will be devalued, and our currency will be inflated. Therefore, they won't get as much return because they will be cheated because the dollars they get back from the United States in terms of interest aren't the same valuable dollars they were originally. The fundamental thing that is working up here in people's minds is that the interest rates could go up. If we use the Blue Chip economics forecast, the total payment in interest could be \$865 billion. If it goes up higher to the rates we saw in the 1980s, it could be \$1.3 trillion. That is just interest, in 1 year, that we would have to pay. Our total budget today is about \$3 trillion. That would be more than a third of the budget.

I don't think the Members of this Congress understand the seriousness of this problem, because look at the bills that go through here. I am a big supporter of farm programs. I supported farm bills year after year, but I couldn't vote for the one this year. It had a 11-percent increase in discretionary spending under the agriculture bill—11 percent. You know, at 7 percent return, your money doubles in 10 years; at 11 percent, the agriculture budget will double in several years.

At a time when we are running up unprecedented debts, we have an 11-percent increase there. It is difficult for me to comprehend. I don't think we are serious about it. Now the House has put in three airplanes so Members of the Congress can take trips with them, presumably. Somebody somewhere needs to be asking: Where are we going to get this money? Every dime of it will be borrowed. The \$800 billion we